

**Amendments to the claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of claims:**

1-2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, in which the composition contains  $17\beta$ -estradiol.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, in which the composition contains estradiol valerate.

5-17. (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, in which the composition contains from 0.5 to 1.5 mg of free estradiol per daily dose.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, in which the composition contains from 1.5 to 2 mg of estradiol ester per daily dose.

9-17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A method of treating a menopausal ~~woman~~~~women~~ comprising continuously orally administering without interruption to such menopausal ~~women~~ woman a composition containing from 0.5 to 1.5 mg of free estradiol or 1.5 to 2 mg of an estradiol ester, and from 0.625 to 1.25 mg of norgestrel acetate per daily dose.

19-30. (canceled)

31. (previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition in oral administrable form comprising, in combination, from 0.5 to 1.5 mg of free estradiol or 1.5 to 2 mg of an esterified estradiol and from 0.625 to 1.25 mg of norgestrel acetate.

32. (canceled)

33. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein growth of uterine mucosa is prevented and atrophy of the endometrium is induced without inducing a secretory transformation of the endometrium in menopausal women.

34. (withdrawn) The method of claim 33, in which the composition contains 17 $\beta$ -estradiol.

35. (withdrawn) The method of claim 33, in which the composition contains estradiol valerate.

36. (withdrawn) The method of claim 33, in which the composition contains from 0.5 to 1.5 mg of the free estradiol per daily dose.

37. (withdrawn) The method of claim 33, in which the composition contains from 1.5 to 2 mg of the estradiol ester per daily dose.